

## September 2021 Newsletter



Transforming how we age in our community, the Village Network connects us with one another, offering support and opportunities for meaningful, engaging experiences.

Village Network membership offers online wellness programs, interest groups, educational and social events, as well as volunteer services including rides to medical appointments, errands, and community destinations, friendly visitors, computer help, and personalized referrals to community resources. Click [here](#) to view a video on the nationwide nonprofit Village movement.

**We are now offering many more in-person volunteer services and more in-person outdoor interest groups for members and volunteers who are fully vaccinated!**



### **Village News** *Re-opening News*

The Sonoma County Public Health Department again recommends masks indoors for everyone, whether vaccinated or not, so we are continuing all our Zoom programs, as well as outdoor groups and friendly visits with masks. In the meantime, we are planning for future “hybrid” programs in person or on Zoom, when it is safe.

We have a green light from the church to open our office on October 1, but we will need to decide for sure based on public health guidelines at the time. Staff and volunteers are hard at work preparing the offices, as we now have some new space for separate offices. In the meantime, many volunteer services are available, with masks and social distancing. Fully vaccinated members who have submitted a copy of their Vaccination Record Card to the office can request rides to destinations beyond medical appointments, in-home or phone tech help, minor home repairs, and help with yard/garden projects. Volunteers who offer face-to-face services are fully vaccinated and have sent in their vax cards.

If you want to attend Village programs in person or take advantage of in-person volunteer services, please send a copy or photo of your Vaccination Record Card to [info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org). You could also request a volunteer to photograph your card to send to the office – call 776-6055.

### **Hooked on Gardening? Become a Published Writer!**

The Newsletter Team seeks a Gardening Columnist as well as writers of short pieces on all kinds of topics. Contact Anne Greenblatt at [apgreen@sonic.net](mailto:apgreen@sonic.net) to learn more.



# Volunteer Opportunities

We have an Introductory Volunteer Training scheduled for Tuesday September 14 at 2:00 pm. Contact Carol Appel if you are interested in learning more, at [info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org). Drivers wanted! The Tech Team also seeks volunteers of all ages. To learn more about the Tech Team, contact Bob Bailey at [rhbailey@sonic.net](mailto:rhbailey@sonic.net).



## Special Programs for September and October

Online calendar at [www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org](http://www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org)

To join us for any of the programs listed below, please register for the event online at [www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org/events](http://www.villagenetworkofpetaluma.org/events), or contact the Village by calling the office at 707-776-6055, or email us at [info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org). If you are a member needing Tech Help, you can request one of our Tech volunteers to call you. Programs on Zoom can be joined by phone as well.

### Get to Know the Village Information Meeting

**Thursday, September 16, 10:00 – 11:00 am, on Zoom or by phone.**

Have you been thinking about learning more about the Village once we open up more? Join us to get your questions answered. We offer a trusted community of mutual support, ways to re-engage with our community, explore new interests, and make new friends. This is an information meeting for potential members (ages 50+), their loved ones, and those interested in volunteering. We are especially seeking volunteer drivers and friendly visitors/callers. **Register by September 15 online or by phone at 707-776-6055.**

### Peace of Mind Planner

**Monday, September 13, 1:00 - 2:30 pm, on Zoom.**

Retired attorney and Village member Teresa Nelson will do a **repeat** of her July presentation, helping us get our affairs in order and giving you and your loved ones peace of mind. Using the workbook, you'll learn how and where to enter vital details about your contacts, legal matters, health, financial affairs, your wishes, and more. Open to members and volunteers; **attendance is limited**. In order to have the free workbook in your hands at the workshop, **you must register by September 6** so we can deliver it to you. Open to the public.

*Presenter Teresa Nelson is a local attorney and Village volunteer.*

### Might Home Sharing Be for You?

**Thursday, September 23, 1:00 - 2:30 pm, on Zoom.**

Learn about SHARE Sonoma County, which matches those with room to spare with those in need of permanent housing. Since 2014 SHARE has been creating genuinely affordable housing through home sharing, enhancing the health, wellness, and dignity of all. Open to members, volunteers, and the public.

*Presenter Amy Appleton is the Founder and Executive Director of SHARE Sonoma County.*

### Let's Go to The Fair: Panama Pacific International Expo, 1915

**Monday, October 18, 1:00 - 2:30 pm, on Zoom.**

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes of the 1906 earthquake, San Francisco put on a grand fair. We will virtually visit this amazing event and learn about the politicians, designers, and artists behind the expo's tremendous success. It covered many blocks in the Marina District and included the iconic Palace of Fine Arts. Open to members, volunteers, and the public.

*Presenter Linda Loveland Reid is a frequent lecturer for the OLLI programs at Sonoma State and Dominican Universities. She is also a painter, theater director, and novelist.*

# Classes and Interest Groups



## The Village Walking Group has resumed!

**Thursdays, 9:00 am, meet at Walnut Park on 4th St., between D and E Sts.**

We walk neighborhood streets for about an hour. Also, we're planning to eventually branch out to some local parks like Helen Putnam Park, for those who enjoy hiking. For more information or if you would like to start a new Village walking group, especially on the East Side, contact the Village at 707-776-6055 or email: [info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org).

## We're resuming! Village Drop-In Coffee Hour

**Wednesdays, 9:00 – 10:00 am, Aqus Cafe, 189 H St.**

Village Network members and active volunteers are invited to a weekly Wednesday drop-in outdoors. Join us as we appreciate being together in person again! Village member and volunteer Tiaga Liner facilitates.



## TED Talks Discussion Group

**Friday, September 10, 11:00 am – noon, on Zoom.**

In each meeting we view TED Talks on Zoom together and then discuss them. The specific talks will be announced to members and volunteers a few days ahead of time.

## Game Night

**Friday, September 10, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom. (Meets 2nd Friday of the month)**

Bring your favorite drink and have fun! We'll try several games – no special talents needed. Members and volunteers are welcome. Register online or call 776-6055. *Hosted by Fatima Lassar.*

## Village Social Hour

**Friday, September 17, 4:00 – 5:00 pm, on Zoom.**

Bring your favorite drink and join us to relax together, share our lives, and have fun. For members, volunteers, and those interested in learning more about the Village. *Hosted by Paul and Anne Greenblatt.*

## Bocce Ball in Leghorn's Park

**NEW SUMMER HOURS: Wednesdays, September 1 and 15, 7:00 – 8:00 pm, Leghorn Park's bocce courts. (Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month)**

Bocce is a game everyone can enjoy. No experience necessary and newcomers are always welcome. We pretend to be competitive, but we really just socialize and have fun. If you are not yet fully vaccinated please wear a mask, but if you are fully vaccinated please send a photo or copy of your vax card to VNP and you will not need to wear a mask for this outdoor activity. If you are interested in coming, please RSVP by email to George Beeler at [agbcomm@sonic.net](mailto:agbcomm@sonic.net) by Wednesday 12 noon.



## Gentle Chair Yoga – Stay Healthy During Stressful Times

**Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – noon, on Zoom.**

We practice yoga asanas, Eden Energy exercises, breath work, and meditation to improve strength, flexibility, and inner calm. Beginners welcome. The class is currently conducted over Zoom, and you will have the option to be seen or only heard, if you choose. Donations by non-members welcome.



*Pat Martin, CMT, EEM-CP, CYT, is a State Certified Massage Therapist, Eden Energy Medicine Certified Practitioner, and Certified Yoga Teacher.*

## The Joy of Writing Group



**Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 am, on Zoom.**

We write for fun, in fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, etc. We write original stories in a noncritical environment. Come have fun with us, whether you are a veteran writer or a nervous beginner. All are welcome. Members free, non-members \$5 donation.

## Men's Discussion Group

**Tuesdays, 11:00 am, on Zoom.**

We get together with other men via Zoom to discuss our lives in a spirit of fellowship. The group is limited to eight Village members and volunteers. A new group is forming. Contact Paul Greenblatt if you're interested, at [paul.greenblatt@sonic.net](mailto:paul.greenblatt@sonic.net)

## The Village Garden Group Meets Outdoors in Members' Gardens

**Tuesday, September 7, noon – 1:30 pm. (Meets first Tuesday of the month)**

In this group, we talk about anything from sharing seeds, plants, fruits, and vegetables, to art and jigsaw puzzles. Join our friendly group!



## Retired Nurses Group



**Wednesday, September 8, 10:15 – 11:45 am, on Zoom.**

We discuss our nursing practices, education, and favorite stories while getting to know one another. If you're interested in joining, call 707-776-6055 or [info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org](mailto:info@VillageNetworkofPetaluma.org)

## Events Around Town



### Mandatory Water Conservation



Periodic droughts are a part of life in California. Because of this, Petaluma has a multi-stage Water Shortage Contingency Plan ready to go when drought conditions, like those we are experiencing now, arise. We are now in Stage 3 of this plan, designed to reduce our city's water usage by 25% through mandatory water use restrictions. See: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/drought>

## Living With Dementia 2021 Online Conference



**Tuesday, September 21, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm.**

Senior Care Authority and Sequoia Senior Solutions are presenting nine experts offering insightful perspectives for families and professionals. Topics will include:

- Beyond Driving with Dignity — Resolving the Complex Issues of Older Drivers;
- Breakthroughs in Dementia Medications;
- Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior; and much more.

See the full lineup and all the details for what is sure to be an informative and engaging conference.

Every \$40 [registration](#) benefits the Walk to End Alzheimer's.

## Clucktown Collective Market

**Saturday, September 4, 10:00 – 5:00 pm, Happy Dahlia Flower Farm, 2478 E. Washington St.**

Clucktown Collective Market is a collection of vendors who showcase local, unique, vintage, and one-of-a-kind products. The three Outdoor Summer Markets will feature over 28 vendors, and the Happy Dahlia Flower Farm will be in full bloom. Join us for a Clucking Good Time, Flowers and More! See a list of vendors on our website: [www.clucktowncollective.com](http://www.clucktowncollective.com)

## Petaluma Newcomers Social

Tuesday, September 21, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, Aqus Café, H & 2nd Sts.

Welcome – meet – connect.

## Qigong Online

Teja Bell, Zen Master and committed practitioner of Qigong, offers a 12-minute guided Qigong practice at

<https://vimeo.com/qigongdharma>

# Contributions by Village Members and Volunteers

## Sequoia Senior Solutions: A Business Forged with Synergy and Love



When Gabriella Ambrosi and Stanton Lawson met in Italy in 1978, they immediately felt attracted. Stan laughingly explains, “She was a nurse, I was a rugby player. What could be more natural?” Although he was studying abroad for a year, with a dual major in Italian Literature and Business Economics, she had already begun a nursing career, following a life-long affinity for helping others, particularly elders.

After they married and settled in Italy in 1980, Stan found a job at Olivetti as Internal Auditor. He was later transferred to New York and became Chief Financial Officer of an Olivetti subsidiary. Meanwhile, Gabriella attended college and obtained her BA in Biological Sciences. Stan was transferred back to Italy in 1988 and Gabriella found a marketing position for a large international company in the medical field. Stan, however, missed Dillon Beach, CA, where he’d grown up, so in 1994 they decided to move to the area.

“Growing up in a multigenerational family, I had deep relationships with my grandparents and gravitated toward seniors,” Gabriella explains. She dreamed of running her own home-based business so that she could raise her three small children. Being working parents with young children was difficult. “We both wanted to co-parent our sons,” Gabriella says, so she asked Stan to attend a meeting with her to learn about home healthcare agencies.

“Once I knew more, I asked her to hire me when she started the business,” Stan says. “There was a natural synergy between her nursing, marketing, and interpersonal skills and my business, finance, and operations experience.” In 2003, when their oldest son was 11 and their twin boys were four, Sequoia Senior Solutions was born. The biggest challenge was becoming a referral-based business, but with few local competitors, and thanks to their complementary skills, the business flourished.

Fast forward to 2021, and the couple has tripled the size of their company by acquiring a competitor. With three offices in Northern California and 150 employees, today’s challenge is finding qualified employees as the need for senior caregivers grows and the supply of available workers shrinks. The pandemic has compounded this challenge, and their key question for job applicants is, “What makes your heart want to help seniors?” It takes flexible skills, kindness, and concern for others to do this type of work.

“Nothing better ever happened to us than working and living together 24/7,” Stan says. “Sharing challenges of the business and raising the boys has united us, and while we may have different opinions, we share the same goals.” Since 2014 they have been a Diamond Sponsor of the Petaluma Village Network. “We love the organization’s model and want to help seniors, even those who can’t afford our services,” Gabriella says. For the past 12 years, they have received awards from the *North Bay Business Journal* as one of the best places to work in the region, recognition that their business success is driven by their love and care for both clients and staff.

Hint: Ask Stan his favorite quotes from Dante’s *Inferno*.

- Mary Alden



## Stress and Resilience



Resilience may be defined as flexibility, elasticity, toughness. As we age, we are encouraged to maintain flexibility and elasticity, to toughen up soft, flabby muscles that need to support our frames. Beyond physical resilience is mental and emotional resilience. Recent studies at Stanford University, building on earlier research about resilience as people age, has produced encouraging findings: older people seem to have coped better with the challenges of the pandemic than much younger cohorts.

Recently Stanford surveyed almost 1000 people aged 18 to 76 with varied gender, race, ethnic, economic, health, and personality traits. They found that older people consistently exhibited lower levels of stress and better emotional wellness. Although seniors monitored news of COVID-19 more closely than younger groups and had a greater perceived risk of death, they showed less stress than younger counterparts.

Could it be that seniors have discovered silver linings in those COVID clouds? Perhaps a range of life experiences inoculates seniors, enabling them to cope with what life throws their way, and “turning lemons into lemonade,” as the saying goes. Researchers continue to study why seniors seem to have less stress and better emotional health despite threats like the pandemic. Perhaps years coping with life’s vicissitudes provided us with resilience that we didn’t fully appreciate until we faced the pandemic?

- Mary Alden

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## Cool Block Leaders Needed Soon!



Can the City of Petaluma achieve carbon neutrality by 2030? Our Climate Action Commission thinks we can and has signed up to join the Cool City Challenge. This program is about building relationships and connections within our community to achieve by 2030 what we thought we might be able to accomplish by 2050 in order to avoid irreversible ecological tipping points. To be eligible to win \$1 million over five years to help us in this goal, the city must comply with a list of requirements set by the Empowerment Institute. One of the requirements is to identify 25 groups willing to be Community Partners in this effort, and the Village Network would like to be one of those partners.

The Commission is also looking for 200 Cool Block Leaders. Cool Block Leaders form a team and invite five to eight neighbors to attend a series of nine meetings over a period of four and a half months. The meetings will touch on the issues emergency preparedness, water conservation, and sustainability. If you are interested in participating in the Cool City Challenge and being a Cool Block Leader, please contact City Council member Dennis Pocekay, at [dpocekay@comcast.net](mailto:dpocekay@comcast.net), for the details. And see: [coolblock.org/cool-city-challenge](http://coolblock.org/cool-city-challenge)

- Jane Merryman

Birds are great listeners, too.  
They know a good deal about taking  
chances, having to fly out of their nests  
and everything.  
They must think we’re so funny down here  
on the ground *letting our fears stop us.*

- Pixie Lighthouse



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## Forgetfulness Can Foster Creativity

Good news about forgetting: it's not only normal at all ages, but beneficial. Many of us struggle with memory lapses as we age -- and consider them a sign of cognitive decline. However, recent research reminds us that some amount of forgetfulness is critical for our minds and relationships to function at their best. We need sleep to help us sort through events of the day and let go of memories we don't need. Remembering too much extraneous information isn't helpful. It can

keep us anxious, angry, and fearful, ruminating over upsetting incidents — and it can make us lonely.

Creativity requires forming connections between elements we already know in order to make something new. But to make new connections, the existing connections in our brains need to be looser. If they are too tightly bound in our memories, there's no room for creativity. There are two main ways our minds let go of unnecessary information or bad memories: getting enough sleep and staying socially engaged. Isolation can imbue a brain running too hot with bad memories.

Most of us know what it's like to wake up in the middle of the night with an overactive brain. So finding a way to get a good night's sleep can make a big difference in our outlook and in our creativity. The brain is a little like grass; you need to keep it trimmed to make way for new memories, new connections, and new growth.

From *Forgetting: The Benefits of Not Remembering* by Scott Small.

- Anne Greenblatt

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## Gardening

### Houseplants Can Help Improve Air Quality

Numerous studies over the past decade have shown that access to plants — including houseplants — reduces heart rate and blood pressure, improves concentration, elevates mood, and instills an overall sense of peace and relaxation. Here are three reliable stars that can also help with overall air quality. Most plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen at night, so good for bedrooms and/or living rooms. Several can be somewhat toxic to pets, so keep them out of reach.



**English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)** is a fast-growing climbing vine with dark green waxy leaves. Incredibly easy to grow, especially as a hanging plant. It does need four hours of direct sunlight, regular watering, and an occasional misting. However, NASA scientists listed English ivy as the number-one plant for clean air, because it absorbs formaldehyde and reduces airborne mold by 94%, and it also diminishes allergies.

**Snake plant (*Sansevieria*)** has stiff, upright blades slightly variegated with yellow. It thrives despite our neglect and can reach 4 feet tall. It needs moderate to bright light exposure. Snake plants have been proven effective in treating headaches, eye irritation, and respiratory issues.



**Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*)** With lush, dark green, oval leaves and a reliable bloom of white flowers, this low-maintenance, hardy plant needs minimal direct light and will also let you know when it's thirsty by its drooping leaves. Peace lilies are reported to humidify and clean the air by reducing toxic VOCs from harsh cleaning products. Their lovely flowers inspired the plant's name long before scientists found it really can bring calm to our stressful lives.

See also: <https://www.sunset.com/lifestyle/wellness/houseplant-health-qualities>, and

<https://www.healthline.com/health/air-purifying-plants#easy-plants>

- Anne Greenblatt

## What We Are Reading



### ***The Collected Works of Jim Morrison: Poetry, Journals, Transcripts, and Lyrics* by Jim Morrison**

A few years ago I had the privilege of reading through Jim Morrison's journals, which he kept from age eight until his untimely death. Now, 50 years after the passing of the late Doors' frontman, his family has published this incredible view of the genius and proficiency of this young artist. Full of rare photographs and excerpts of his poetry and lyrics from his handwritten notebooks. Highly recommended. - *Julia McMichael*

### ***American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins**

Suspenseful and informative, this is the gripping story of a mother and her seven-year-old son on the run. Lydia, a bookstore owner and wife of a journalist, overnight loses her comfortable life, her husband, and her extended close family. The target of a dangerous and powerful cartel, she and her son journey through a threatening land as they join with other migrants seeking refuge in the United States. - *Nancy Sullivan*

### ***The Hunting Wives* by May Cobb**

What drives these women is not skeet shooting, which they do, but hunting different pleasures. The story is marked by internecine episodes and evolving relationships, especially one between a newcomer to the tribe and her erotic interest in its undeclared leader. The evolution of this obsession is carefully and slowly parceled out, and eventually eclipsed only by several murders that need solving. - *Jerry Spremich*

### ***When the Stars Go Dark* by Paula McLain**

A burnt-out San Francisco police detective travels to Mendocino to heal from a recent trauma, the nature of which is not revealed until the book's end. She promptly becomes involved in the investigation of a missing teenage girl. Although that case is fictional, it is interwoven with the actual Polly Klaas case, which brings the detective to Petaluma, where several scenes take place. The dark and suspenseful nature of the story is illuminated by the author's note at the end, which is probably best read first. - *Kathleen Lawrence*

## Jerry's Film Column



**Netflix:** *The Keepers*: This is a true story about sexual abuse and its cover up. Attempts to unravel the truth were stonewalled by the police, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the clergy, the Baltimore Sexual Prosecution office, and other players. A well-liked 26-year-old Catholic nun (Cathy Cesnik) was murdered in 1969 to prevent her revealing the abuse. The cold case gets heated up by two of her former students.

**Tubi:** *The Skin of Sorrow*: Set in 1832 France, this is a morality tale based on some writings of Honoré de Balzac. It explores the fact that what you wish for may not be what you want. And what you really want may be living in the same house as you. The ending is so French! Tubi is a free streaming service – just mute the ads.

**Tubi:** *The Crimson Petal and the White*: In Victorian London, a successful businessman takes up with a prostitute while trying to cater to his troubled wife. The former becomes governess for the couple's daughter and moves in with them. How the prostitute resolves conflicts posed by her selfish lover, the compliant child, and the confused wife is fascinating.

**Amazon Prime:** *Modern Love*: This romantic comedy TV series explores love and human connection in all of its complicated and beautiful forms. Each episode brings to life a different real-life story inspired by the *New York Times* popular Modern Love column. Notable actors help bring these stories to life, with mixed results.

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**As part of a national movement, the Village Network of Petaluma is a nonprofit membership organization empowering adults 50+ to live active, independent, and connected lives in the places we call home.**

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